

VZCZCXRO3203  
PP RUEHBI  
DE RUEHLM #1863/01 3121312  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 081312Z NOV 06  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4674  
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6496  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4553  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3299  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0179  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3388  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2469  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0067  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 7037  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 4858  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001863

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR A/S BOUCHER AND SCA/INS, USPACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/08/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY: AMBASSADOR  
PRESSES FOR GREATER MILITARY RESTRAINT; SECRETARY REPORTS  
ON GSL EFFORTS TO RESUPPLY JAFFNA

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr. for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

Need for Greater Military Restraint  
-----

¶1. (C) Ambassador met alone with Presidential Secretary (defacto National Security Advisor) Lalith Weeratunga on November 7 to register concern that the Sri Lankan military's recent military actions had become increasingly difficult to justify as "defensive." The U.S. wanted to continue to support Sri Lanka's right to defend itself, but rather than exercising military restraint, the Sri Lankan military appeared to be using every opportunity it could to pursue military action against the LTTE. For example, the military appeared to be using reports of LTTE meetings such as that in Kilinochchi or minor LTTE military movements to justify aerial bombings of LTTE positions that were often disproportionate and clearly not in the spirit of the military restraint that the government had committed itself to. Continued disproportionate and offensive military action risked an equal response by the LTTE, possibly in Colombo or the south, which in turn would lead to a further escalation of the conflict and diminish prospects for resuming peace negotiations.

¶2. (C) Weeratunga (please strictly protect throughout) acknowledged the Ambassador was right and said he had been discussing this same problem with Peace Secretariat Director Kohona and others within the government. He said the military was operating on a long leash and urged the Ambassador to be in touch with Secretary of Defense Rajapaksa to make these same points since he had the best chance of influencing military decision making on this important point. (Ambassador will do so.)

Government Re-Supplying Jaffna  
-----

¶3. (C) Turning to the humanitarian situation in Jaffna, Ambassador asked what the GSL's plan was to relieve conditions there. Weeratunga responded that he had been asked by the President to chair a high-level task force with the Commissioner General of Essential Services and others to

organize a GSL air and sealift operation of humanitarian supplies to Jaffna. As a result the government was now sending three C-130 loads a day of medical and other supplies and was organizing shiploads of bulk grains and fuel that were going up Sri Lanka's western coast from Colombo to the port of Kankasantural (commonly known as KKS) north of Jaffna. He said he expected to have all of Jaffna's needs fully met in the near future and to have a one-month supply of buffer stocks of food, fuel and medical supplies by December 1.

14. (C) Ambassador welcomed the government's pro-active work to help relieve conditions in Jaffna, but noted that such an operation had to be very costly for the GSL. He asked whether it wouldn't make sense for the longer term to open the A-9 road? Weeratunga first responded that the government would never open the A-9 road both because it does not want to give the LTTE the opportunity to tax vehicles going through the areas it controls, but also because it does not want to allow the LTTE greater flexibility to move military equipment and personnel along the A-9. With respect to the tax issue the Ambassador suggested that the co-chairs were thinking of a proposal that would allow the UN or ICRC to organize convoys of humanitarian supplies on a weekly or bi-weekly basis along the A-9. In return the LTTE would agree not to tax these convoys and would also agree not to attack ICRC or UN flagged vessels carrying humanitarian supplies from Trincomalee to Jaffna. Would the government support such a proposal he asked? Weeratunga said he thought they would for limited exceptions such as this, but that a permanent opening of the A-9 was likely to meet significant resistance.

Comment and Action Request

COLOMBO 00001863 002 OF 002

-----  
15. (C) Weeratunga is one of the experienced moderates in the government, but has little ability to influence the powerful military. Ambassador will visit Ampara on November 9-10, after which he will seek a private meeting with the Defense Secretary to underline the need for military restraint. It

SIPDIS  
would be helpful if U/S Burns or A/S Boucher could plan to call Secretary Rajapaksa following the Ambassador's meeting to reinforce Washington's concern and help us prepare the ground for the November 20-21 Co-Chair meeting in Washington. We will report on the Rajapaksa meeting first.  
BLAKE